



FROM: MR DI MEO

Music Curriculum Review

March 2019

Music for All

Stemming from the founding vision of Mrs Eaton, the school's music programme is based on 'Music for All' as set out in a brochure available from Reception at Upper and Lower Schools. As part of a broader performing arts focus, including dance and drama, LHPA's strength in music has been recognised by governors, staff and parents, by the Slough Music Hub, across the local community in Langley, Slough and Windsor and in national media, including mention in the Sunday Express and on BBC Radio 4. Having reached our 7th anniversary, the music culture, along with other aspects of the school, following a period of rapid growth, experimentation and expansion, is becoming well established and is approaching maturity. In an Ofsted report (November 2016), music teaching at the School was considered to be "excellent". Over the coming two years, our standards will continue to rise and our curriculum will continue to develop and broaden, but more steadily than before. This paper sets out information in sections on:

- The Music Team
- Music workshop
- Assemblies, Choirs, Orchestras and ensembles
- Clubs and Private lessons
- Shows, concerts and educational visits
- Attainment, progression and transition to secondary school and beyond

The Music Team

In January 2019, the music team consisted of 15 visiting hourly-paid teachers plus 8 salaried members of staff who contribute to the music programme. This is a remarkably strong and talented team, which compares favourably with that of many independent preparatory schools. I am particularly pleased to report that, as a result of focused work on team building over the past few years, the team has high morale and energy, low staff turnover, and is well balanced with strengths in each of the key areas of singing, strings, woodwind, brass, keyboard, percussion and early years. Amongst the team supporting Claudio Di Meo (Head of Music), Erica Tugwell is Lower School Music Manager, and provides administrative support including Violin administration. Allun Proom directs is our Head of Brass and Rachel Cooper Head of String. Staff resumes are listed in a separate document.

Members of the Music Team are well networked with the Slough Music Hub and other local schools and community organisations. Many of our teachers also teach at several other local schools both private and state. This brings benefits for our children in transition to secondary and in performance and additional learning opportunities across the local community.

Over the past years, LHPA contributed to the education of Reading University students training to be specialist primary music teachers and one student completed a placement with us.

Music workshop

All children do 1½ hours of music one afternoon each week (Music for All). This is the core of our activity, from which other elements radiate out. These group lessons are provided free as part of the curriculum.

In Years 1, 2 and 3, all children do three half-hour lessons in singing, recorder and violin (from 2019 violin lessons start from September in Year 1). Parents are responsible for buying their child's recorder and violin, although these instruments are usually bought through the school, and the school provides advice on violin sizing, a market in 2nd hand instruments, and free loan violins for Free School Meal families. Children are expected to practise regularly at home. Violin classes are differentiated into Star Groups from midway through Year 2, with the top Star Groups making more rapid progress. Violin and Recorder Gold, Silver and Bronze awards are issued at the end of Year 3.

In Years 4, 5 and 6, children take two 45-minute lessons in music workshop. Some children study two instruments, other children do one instrument and a music appreciation class. Out of 104 (approx.) children in each year group, approximately 64 are selected based on aptitude tests to continue with violin during Year 4; this reduces to approximately 32 Year 5 children and 32 Year 6 children continuing with violin. The school has purchased a number of other instruments for free use by some fortunate Year 4, 5 and 6 children. Cello and Brass instruments start in Year 4, while Flute and Clarinet start in Year 5. With purchase of additional instruments, it is planned to start some children on Flute and Clarinet in Year 4. Starting from September 2019 children will have the opportunity to also learn a new instrument, the Saxophone. Allocation of children to these instruments is based on aptitude tests. It is a particular privilege to study one of these instruments at LHPA and the privilege is withdrawn if the child does not practise regularly at home. Other instruments provided by the school and used by some Year 5 and 6 classes include Keyboards, African Drums, Ukuleles, Glockenspiels and 'Boomwhackers'.

Weekly 'Booster' group violin lessons for selected Pupil Premium and new starters in Year 2 and Year 3 are in our vision to support their Music Workshop learning.

Over the coming year, in line with the school development plan, a number of special learning events will be arranged to broaden our range of musical genres (for example Gospel Choir workshops).

A further development to music workshop has been the implementation of an electronic system (MOSART) aimed at improving the gathering of data related to: attendance, timeliness, behaviour and regularity of practice. This system allows us to monitor more closely the progress of students, leading to higher outcomes for all.

Assemblies, Choirs, Orchestras and Ensembles

All children sing in morning assemblies at least twice each week, one led by Mr Di Meo, the other led by a senior member of staff together with one of the Music Team to accompany. Hymns, Sacred and Secular songs in assemblies are linked to seasonal themes. These songs are currently selected by Mrs Rigby (singing teacher).

50% of Years 3 and 4, and 33% of Year 5 and 6 have a weekly Choir practice led by Mr Di Meo and Mrs Vidal. The top 30 violin and cello players in Years 5 and 6 are selected to form a String Orchestra with a weekly lesson led by Miss Cooper. The top 24 violin players in Year 4 are selected for a weekly Violin Ensemble. Selected Year 6 flute and clarinet players together with Year 4, 5 and 6 brass players attend a weekly Concert Band led by our Head of Brass Mr Proom together with Mrs Tugwell. Choirs, String Orchestra and Concert Band perform regularly in concerts in school, elsewhere in the local community of Langley, Slough and Windsor and sometimes further afield. A large 'Music for All orchestra' is formed to take part in our annual Year 5&6 Music for All concert.

Since September 2018, LHPA has also given the opportunity to 20 selected children to be part of a new "Small Choir", that rehears once every week preparing repertoire for Mixed Choir.

Clubs and Private lessons

Weekly afterschool clubs are scheduled at both Lower School and Upper School, including percussion, African drums, singing, ukulele, musical theatre, Rock band (selective) and Theory of Music (selective). A new Advanced String club was set up in September 2018 to challenge those string players that have shown particular promise in year 5/6.

An increasing number of children are taking private lessons in singing or on one or more instruments at LHPA. These lessons, given by members of the Music Team, are arranged at times to suit the 'trio' of parents, class teacher and visiting teacher, within permitted times agreed by the Senior Leadership Team of the School; these times may be before or after school, in lunchtimes or during certain other lessons but never clash with Numeracy, Literacy, Games, Swimming or Music Workshop. Children who take private lessons and who practise regularly are likely to advance to be two years 'ahead' of their peers.

Free School Meals families are entitled to half-price private music lessons, a discounted weekly afterschool club as well as a loan violin for Music Workshop.

Shows, concerts and educational visits

All LHPA children have regular performance opportunities. A habit of performing from an early age builds skills that, we believe, will be applicable throughout the lives of our children. A benefit often perceived to accrue from education in the independent sector is increased confidence. We believe that we are effectively nurturing this here in our Free School within the state sector. Shows, concerts and informal concerts are highly motivating for the children and an opportunity for parents, friends and other stakeholders to enjoy seeing the fruits of LHPA children's work.

We hold annual 'Music for All' concerts for Lower School and for Years 3&4 (both in the Spring Term) and for Years 5&6 in the Summer Term. In these concerts, the emphasis is on Choirs, Orchestras and Ensemble. Year 5&6 have their annual musical production in the Autumn Term and Year 3&4 in the Spring Term. Early evening 'Informal Concerts' are held once each term, in which the emphasis is on solo or small group items. Separate concerts are sometimes held for the school's singers and guitarists. Additionally, the school holds Christmas assemblies in St Mary's Church, Langley for Upper School children (Christmas shows are in school for Lower School children), plus a number of external concerts and educational music visits. Since September 2018, we took groups to:

- Windsor, to hear the Orpheus Sinfonia perform L'Histoire de Babar (F. Poulenc)
- Langley Memorial Park, for a Harvest Celebration event (Lower School children perform)
- Windsor Parish Church, for a Schools' concert as part of Windsor Festival (Upper School children perform)
- Harrow Market, switching on the Christmas lights in the Harrow shops and to do the regular Christmas assemblies and shows.
- Nicola Benedetti violin masterclass
- Carol Service at St. Mary's Church, in Langley
- London, at Royal Albert Hall to watch 'My Great Orchestral Adventure'
- Savill Garden (Year 3 choir)
- Sebastian Mueller Masterclass
- Bourne End visit to play carols and perform excerpts from Aladdin
- Visit from Windsor International String Competition
- Gospel Choir workshop
- Children have joined Slough Youth Orchestra

The school regularly performs in the prestigious Windsor Festival, in Eton College Chapel for an annual Carol Service, and we are already planning another visit (in 2020) for the Year 5/6 Choir making its third visit to sing with the College Choir at Jesus College, Cambridge.

Positive outcomes and progression to secondary school and beyond

Our music programme is highly distinctive and possibly unique. It is also starting to deliver great results.

In summer 2015, our first batch of Music Workshop educated children reached Associated Board Grade 1 on violin and clarinet, including several distinctions.

In the academic year 2015-16 our examinations passes in public exams spanning Trinity Musical Theatre, ABRSM Music Theory and ABRSM Practical on piano, violin, cello, clarinet and cornet numbered 81, including 11 distinctions. We congratulate our first batch of Music Workshop educated children to reach Associated Board Grade 2 on violin, cello and clarinet.

In December 2016, new records were set for the highest Distinction marks yet recorded for LHPA children in Associated Board Music exams when Alina Mahmood scored 139/150 for Grade 1 piano and Lucy Pey Ting Tsang 137/150 for Grade 1 cello.

In the Summer 2017 or 2018 we have consolidated these achievements and we brought some children to Grade 3 standard from our Music Workshop teaching alone. Children that have moved on to Secondary School but have continued lessons with teachers at LHPA are reaching up to Grade 6 and even 7 ABRSM.

In the Summer 2019 we aim to consolidate these achievements even more and to bring some children to Grade 4 standard.

LHPA children can benefit from an intake at Langley Grammar School reserved for children judged by LGS to have musical potential, for whom the required 11+ mark is reduced. Success in LHPA's music, dance and drama programme sometimes also facilitates entry to other state secondary and independent schools. Our children are recognised as a real asset in other selective and non-selective secondary schools which have strong music programmes, including St. Bernard's Catholic Grammar School.

A number of LHPA leavers return for afterschool lessons at LHPA during Year 7 and Year 8. These lessons include private instrumental lessons, music theory classes, an 'Alumni' violin club.

More broadly, LHPA believes that our 'Music for All' approach, centred on the Music Workshop programme, has a positive impact on children's enjoyment of school, enhanced receptiveness to other areas of the curriculum, and increased confidence, social and performance skills, and that this will be of lasting benefit to many of them, above and beyond their enjoyment and skills in music itself.